

Exclusive Images From Inside British Court Expose Assange's Un-democratic Treatment, Physical Deterioration

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Photographs surreptitiously taken inside a British courtroom and provided to The Grayzone show a visibly disoriented Julian Assange confined to a glass cage and unable to communicate with his lawyers.

Photographs taken inside London's Woolwich Crown Court and provided exclusively to The Grayzone highlight the un-democratic measures the British security state has imposed on jailed Wikileaks publisher [Julian Assange](#).

Captured during Assange's extradition hearing, which took place between February 24 and 28, the images highlight the confinement Assange has been subjected to, as well as the physical deterioration he has experienced since he was arrested in April 2019 and jailed in a maximum security prison.

On February 26, Judge Vanessa Baraitser vowed to hold anyone in contempt of court for taking photographs. However, an observer had taken several photos a day before the judge's warning.

Anonymous Scandinavia, a Sweden-based group of Wikileaks supporters, provided the photos to The Grayzone in order to expose what they considered to be the state repression of an investigative journalist.

The images show Assange confined to a glass cage, physically sequestered from his legal team, and unable to follow his own trial.

Throughout the hearing, Assange protested his isolation, [complaining](#) to Judge Baraitser,

"I am as much a participant in these proceedings as I am at Wimbledon. I cannot communicate with my lawyers or ask them for clarifications."

He told members of his legal team he was unable to hear from inside the glass cage.

Below, a seemingly dejected Assange can be seen gazing through the bulletproof glass panes at two of his lawyers, Stella Morris and Baltazar Garzon.



In a [heartfelt video testimonial](#) released this April, Morris disclosed that she was the mother of two infant sons with Assange.

Throughout 2017, Morris was spied on by a Spanish security firm apparently [hired by the CIA through Republican mega-donor Sheldon Adelson's Las Vegas Sands](#). At one point, the director of the firm ordered an employee to steal a diaper from one of Morris's sons in an attempt to match his DNA to that of Assange.

"I understood that the powers that were against Julian were ruthless and there were no bounds to it," Morris commented after learning of the surveillance campaign. "And that's why I feel that I have to [reveal myself as the mother of Assange's children]. Because I've taken so many steps for so many years and I feel that Julian's life might be coming to an end."

"Prolonged exposure to psychological torture" continues in court

Since its foundation in 2010, Wikileaks has published troves of documents exposing American war crimes, meddling, and corruption around the globe. Following the release of thousands of classified State Department cables provided by military whistleblower Chelsea Manning, Vice President Joseph Biden denounced Assange as a ["high-tech terrorist."](#)

As VP, [@JoeBiden](#) called Julian Assange a "high-tech terrorist," helping set the stage for the US-UK prosecution of the publisher and the most pernicious assault on a free press in recent years. pic.twitter.com/w7izfxVTSR

— Max Blumenthal (@MaxBlumenthal) [March 3, 2020](#)

In April 2017, then-CIA director Mike Pompeo [labeled Wikileaks](#) a "hostile foreign intelligence agency," denigrating Assange as a "fraud" in a speech telegraphing Washington's malicious campaign against the publisher.

That December, US federal prosecutors filed a secret indictment charging Assange with 17 counts of violating the Espionage Act. He now faces 175 years in a US prison.

Nils Melzer, the United Nations special rapporteur on torture, warned that, if extradited,

“Assange would be exposed to a real risk of serious violations of his human rights, including his freedom of expression, his right to a fair trial and the prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.”

Melzer was disturbed by the traits he observed after meeting Assange in May 2019. In a [report](#) published by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the expert noted,

“in addition to physical ailments, Mr. Assange showed all symptoms typical for prolonged exposure to psychological torture, including extreme stress, chronic anxiety and intense psychological trauma.”

The photo below reveals a visibly disoriented Assange with a grim pallor and expressionless gaze.



Courtroom cages through history

Though Assange has never been convicted of a crime and has no record of violent behavior, his cage was more restrictive than the enclosure reserved for Adolph Eichmann when the top-level Nazi bureaucrat was placed on trial in Jerusalem in 1961. Unlike Assange, Eichmann was able to communicate freely with his lawyer and listen to a live translation of his trial.



During his corruption trial in Moscow in 2005, the Russian oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky was similarly held in a cage. Following a [formal protest](#) of the confinement by his business partner and co-defendant, Platon Lebedev, who claimed that the cage represented a breach of the right to a presumption of innocence, the [European Court of Human Rights ruled](#) that the two were subjected to “inhuman and degrading conditions in the courtroom.”



When Egypt’s first democratically elected leader, Mohamed Morsi, collapsed and died in a soundproof cage in a courtroom, six years after he was deposed in a 2013 military coup, Western media and [human rights organizations](#) including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International erupted in a [chorus of condemnation](#).

These same rights groups have said little about the draconian restrictions imposed by the British security state on Assange throughout his extradition hearing. But their reticence might be excused on the grounds that clear images of his unwarranted courtroom isolation

were not publicly available until now.

Assange's hearing postponed, his isolation extended



The Belmarsh supermax prison where Assange has been held is regarded as the UK's version of the US facility at Guantanamo. Aside from Assange, the jail is home to mafia henchmen, al-Qaeda members, and neo-fascist enforcers like Tommy Robinson. Around [20 percent](#) of prisoners in Belmarsh are murderers, and two-thirds have committed a violent crime.

[117 licensed medical professionals from around the world have written](#) to the British and Australian governments to condemn "the torture of Assange," "the denial of his fundamental right to appropriate health care, "the climate of fear surrounding the provision of health care to him" and "the violations of his right to doctor-patient confidentiality."

Since the doctors' open letter, Belmarsh has become a site of Covid-19 infection. As journalist Matt Kennard reported, a 2007 report by the UK's Chief Inspector of Prisons [found](#) that "infection control was inadequate" in the detention facility.

Rather than allow a temporary medical furlough for Assange, however, Judge Baraitser has [postponed](#) his extradition trial for four months, disappearing him again from public view.

"In 20 years of work with victims of war, violence and political persecution," the UN's Melzer said of the Wikileaks founder's treatment, "I have never seen a group of democratic states ganging up to deliberately isolate, demonize and abuse a single individual for such a long time and with so little regard for human dignity and the rule of law."

When Assange returns to court this September, the glass cage awaits.

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